UAW Local 72 Collection / Kenosha County Historical Society

FIGHTING TIMES

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LOCAL 72

LABOR DONATED

JAN. 1982

10% TO BE REPAID BY 1994?

IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP MEETING SET FOR SAT. JAN.16 9:30 A.M.

If a Local 72 member walked into the AMC employment office and demanded a loan for a car to be built by Ford, AMC or GM, he would get a lot of laughs. If that member then announced that he would repay the loan in cash or stock in his car with 10% interest starting maybe in 1984 or maybe in 1986, Plant Security would haul him out in a straight jacket. A worker asking the company rather than a bank or the credit union for a loan would be pretty ridiculous in the first place. But to ask for a loan on such one sided terms, he would have to be crazy.

But when the "Employee Investment Plan" is given a close look its terms are not very different or less outrageous. The Plan in present form boils down to AMC asking us to "loan" them 10% of our wages and benefits for the next year and a half. The money is to be spent in Canada, the U.S., or Mexico. AMC proposes to repay us in cash or stock(which can be created on a printing press), with 10% interest starting maybe in 1984 or maybe in 1986.

The plan calls for AMC to start repayment in 1984 if auto profits are above 4%. It is not clear when, if ever AMC auto profits were above 4%. If the company does not show an auto profit above 4%, then the repayment will start in 1986 out of a fund generated from $100 from every car sold. The total investment is supposed to come to $150 million from all AMC workers. With 10% interest added on, the total that AMC would have to repay would be $165 million. That would mean that they would have to sell 1.65 million cars in order to repay us all in cash. At a rate of 200,000 sales per year it would take over 8 years to raise the needed cash. In other words, we would be repayed, maybe by 1994.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: CONCESSIONS IN THE UAW

SEE PAGES 5 - 8

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JAPANESE COMPUTER MONITORS ABSENTEE & TARDINESS

BEWARE: WANG IS WATCHING

American Motors workers are rapidly becoming "citizens of the world", even though few of us can afford to get very far out of town these days. Just recently we all received letters from management informing us that we now work in a "Foreign Trade Zone" that will be patrolled by customs agents.

With AMC now owned 46% by Renault we are employees or "civil servants" of the French government. The Executive VP of AMC is now J. Dedeurwaerder who was trained in management techniques in France, Belgium and Argentina

The new Renault car that we will soon be building will be manufactured in at least 4 countries, Spain, France, Belgium and the U.S. Parts for the new car will be shipped to Kenosha from Columbia and Mexico.

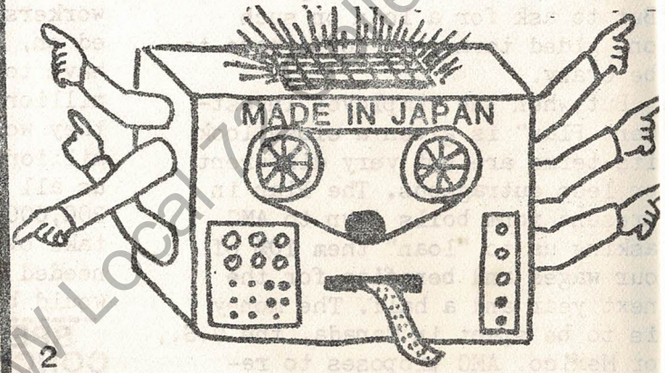
The latest addition to the worldliness of Kenosha workers is from the Far East. Our daily behavior is now being monitored and scrutinized by WANG. Day by day, supervision feeds the new WANG computer designed and built by the Japanese, with every absence and tardy from the 6,000 workers in the 42 departments at AMC.

WANG, who crossed the ocean to watch and judge you, utilizes his micro-chip brain to analyze every unexcused absence and late without permission. To WANG, the 1, 2, or 3 on your record are all part of a days work. At the end of each day the never tiring WANG spits out the "appropriate discipline." Maybe a non-negotiable 5 pager for a 20 year employee who had to rush his child to the hospital--or maybe a writeup without review for a 10 year employee who missed her 13th day in 12 months because of a car break down---all victims of WANG's never ending search for justice and discipline in the Kenosha plant.

LOCAL 72 MEMBERS GAVE GENEROUSLY TO THE SOLIDARNOSC COLLECTION.

WORKERS PLANT-WIDE DONATED $4555

"HELLO MY NAME IS WANG"



WHAT WILL WANG MEAN TO YOU?

The introduction of WANG at AMC has meant a rash of disciplines all over the plant. One of the absurdities of the new system is that WANG has no code for being late with permission. For example a woman in 838 was disciplined for being late twice in one month even though she brought excuses for both days and had a nearly spotless record otherwise.

The company also arbitrarily changed their agreement on tardy's with the union from 24 being acceptable in one year to only 12.

Under the new system, after discipline has been started, your next absence with or without permission is cause for going to the next step. Also, absences with permission or with doctor's excuses are counted toward the 12 days per year you are allowed before discipline starts.

Foremen seem to be scared to bargain with the union on even the most ridiculous cases. Every time that discipline is not issued, the foreman or superintendant has to write a letter to Labor Relations as to why it wasn't given.

The company has gone to far on their new WANG policy. It is time that the union take a firm stand against it.

829 - I.E. GOES AFTER ENVIRONMENTAL BREAKS

Whenever sales are slow, the I.E.'s get their orders to put the squeeze on and look for ways to tighten up jobs. A few weeks ago they came up with an unheard of proposal for workers who spray steering columns in Department 829.

For many years, workers in 829 as well as some in 836 and 837 and in other departments have received environmental breaks ranging up to 15 minutes an hour. Workers on jobs such as lead booth grinding, spraying and CO2 welding have won theses extra breaks through union action to protect their health on dangerous operations.

Some rising star in I.E. came up with the bright idea of putting the sprayers in 829 on a regular 32 minutes per day relief schedule. The environmental relief time was scheduled to be used to perform operations away from spraying, like, stocking the line. To supposedly justify the scheme, the company said that the extra breaks were only for the purpose of getting away from the unhealthy area, not to stop working altogether.

For now, the company's plan hasn't worked--but sprayers beware!

SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO:
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ROBOT KILLS WORKER

In an earlier issue of Fighting Times we reported on a robot trying to assualt a woman worker. Now from Japan comes the report of the first ever killing of a worker by a robot.

The accident occurred in Japan which has 75,000 robots in operation, by far the largest number in the world. The victim of the robot attack was Kenji Urada, a worker at the Kawasaki Heavy Industries plant in Akashi, Japan.

According to the story which was circulated by the L.A. Times, the worker bypassed a safety device and tried to fix the malfunctioning robot with the power still on. He accidentally brushed against the on switch and the claw of the robot pinned him against a machine. Other workers were to late to stop the robot from crushing the worker.

ARA: SCROOGE OF THE YEAR

Throughout the 1981 year, ARA socked us with price increases for coffee, soda, candy, sandwiches and just about everything else in the canteen. In the years past, at least on one day, the day before Christmass vacation, you could feel like you were getting a little something back for your investment in ARA.

But lo and behold, there were no complimentary doughnuts in the canteen for this years Christmas present from ARA. Even though in the past ARA had always substituted smaller doughnuts on freebee day--at least it was the thought that counted. This year ARA brought in the New Year by only giving us a complimentary coffee--earning them the title of Scrooge for '81.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT:

CRISIS IN THE AUTO INDUSTRY WILL CONCESSIONS SAVE THE UAW?

FIGHTING TIMES EDITORIAL:

QUESTIONS ON AMC'S 10% PLAN

In every auto plant across the country, UAW members are facing difficult times and difficult decisions. Auto sales are at their lowest point in over 20 years. In these hard times, the auto companies and the media are saying that our wage and benefit levels are to blame for the crises in the industry. For the first time in history, U.S. corporations are asking for wage cuts in a time of inflation. At a time when solidarity among UAW members is more important than ever, the International union has caved in to the companies and opened the door to cut throat unionism by voting to allow contracts to be reopened.

WHAT ABOUT RENAULT?

For us at AMC, the sought after concessions are being presented in the form of a 10% Employee Investment Plan. Perhaps if we were dealing with just AMC, their appeal for a loan would be a little more believable. But now with Renault, the worlds 6th largest automaker, in the picture, the situation is quite different. We are now dealing with Renault, a company which sold almost 2 million cars in 1980 and invested $1 billion in production facilities in 25 countries in that year. AMC is not a burden, but rather a neccesity to Renault management who realize that they must establish themselves in the huge North American marker if they are to continue to expand and compete with the Japanese. We must keep in mind that for the $350 million that they have invested in AMC, Renault now has access to all AMC plants, a skilled and experienced workforce, 11 subsidaries ranging from foundries to plastics plants and a dealer network with 2,300 outlets. Renault is not going to come this far into the U.S. and back out now. In fact, the December 25th Wall Street Journal reported that Rudolphe Lambert, Renault's executive vice president for North America stated that in the future Renault would, "back AMC with a loan or something like that." Lambert went on to say that "We have to protect engineering and new products,...So if it comes down to that problem-investment-we may have to lend money."

"IF IT COMES DOWN TO THAT PROBLEM - INVESTMENT - WE MAY HAVE TO LEND MONEY." (TO AMC)

RUDOLPHE LAMBERT
RENAULT EXECUTIVE V.P.
FOR NORTH AMERICA

SEE NEXT PAGE

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CONTINUED... WE HAVE SACRIFICED TWICE

Local 72 itself has already paid twice to get Renault work in Kenosha. First, the 1980 contract pushed the most costly benefit and COLA increases to the third year of the contract, giving AMC a break for 2 years. Second, the February 1980 Renault agreement limited manpower moves in Renault production areas. Now AMC is coming back for more, even though the Renault agreement which they signed less than one year ago said that they would not seek to reopen the contract unless the changes were to "Accomadate added work." The 10% Investment Plan in its present form does not guarantee one single job in Kenosha. In fact there is nothing in the plan to stop AMC from using the money to help build the new Renault engine plant in Mexico.

Many of the 2,800 laid off Local 72 members have already taken a 100% wage cut with unemployment and TRA benefits exhausted. With the plant working only 4 weeks since November 1, the rest of the membership is losing money and could lose more in the future as the SUB fund is depleted.

If the Local 72 membership votes at this Saturday's union meeting to enter into further discussion with the corporation, job security in Kenosha should be the #1 priority. We must have guarantees of future product lines in Kenosha, more investment in the Kenosha plant, and guaranteed future employment levels in Kenosha.

10% EMPLOYEE INVESTMENT PLAN-- WHAT IT WOULD COST YOU?

1. COLA 53¢/HOUR
2. BASE RATE 30¢/HOUR
3. TOTAL 83¢/HOUR OR 33.20 A WEEK IN WAGES WOULD BE "INVESTED RIGHT AWAY IF THE PLAN WAS ACCEPTED.
4. FUTURE COSTS STARTING THIS YEAR INCLUDE 5 DAYS OF VACATION, 3 CASUAL DAYS AND THE M.L. KING HOLIDAY FOR A TOTAL OF 9 DAYS OFF LOST.
5. FUTURE COSTS IN WAGES WOULD INCLUDE ALL COLA INCREASES UP TO SEPTEMBER 1983 AND THE 3% RAISE DUE ON 9/20/82(29¢)
6. BY COMPANY ESTIMATES THE TOTAL IN WAGES AND BENEFITS THAT WE WOULD BE INVESTING WOULD BE $2.22/HOUR IN 1982 AND $2.64/HOUR IN 1983. FOR THE FIRST YEAR ALONE THE TOTAL INVESTMENT WOULD BE ABOUT $1,800 PER PERSON.

REPAYMENT PROVISIONS

*IN CASH OR STOCK WITH 10% INTEREST
*REPAYMENT STARTS IN 1984 IF AUTO PROFITS ARE ABOVE 4%
*IF NO REPAYMENT STARTING IN 1984, REPAYMENT WILL START IN 1986 FROM A FUND GENERATED BY $100 FROM EACH CAR SOLD.
*IF AMC GOES BROKE--NO REPAYMENT.

WHERE MONEY WILL BE SPENT

*THE $150 MILLION THAT AMC WORKERS INVEST WILL BE USED IN CANADA, MEXICO OR THE U.S.A.

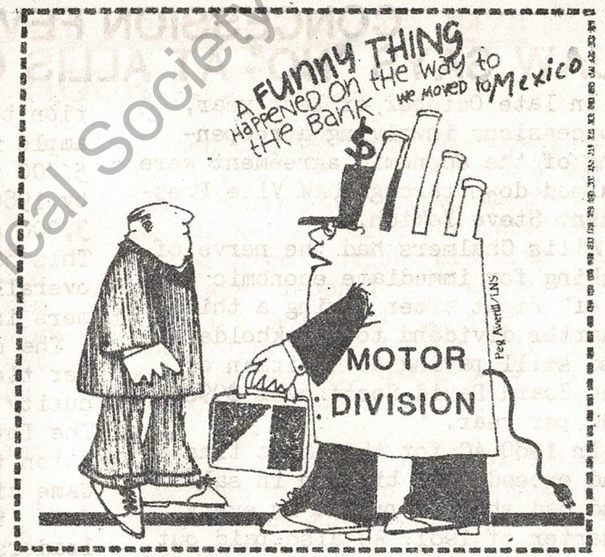
VW & CHRYSLER SUFFER LAYOFFS DESPITE SUB-STANDARD CONTRACT

DO WAGE CUTS GUARANTEE JOBS...

Two recent examples of auto workers working for less show that lower wages don't guarantee or even generate jobs. Chrysler workers are now paid $2.50 an hour less in wages than UAW members at Ford or G.M. They are also about $1 an hour behind on their benefit rates. Yet out of the 100,000 Chrysler workers who were around to vote on those concesssions only 57,000 are still on the job.

Volkswagen workers in the U.S. are also paid substandard wages, but that did not stop 4,750 of them from having an extended shutdown at Christmas time. Their sub-standard contract has also not stopped Volkswagen from postponing indefinately the start up of production at the new VW plant in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

The bottom line is that the number of jobs in the auto industry is determined primarily by the number of sales and right now the industry is selling the fewest cars of any time since 1959.



IS THE U.S./JAPAN WAGE GAP REAL?

The auto companies claim that the wage gap between UAW members and Japanese autoworkers is the cause of the slump in the auto industry. But a couple of facts show that argument for the smokescreen that it is. First, a recent study by auto industry consultant James Harbour, which was reported in the Kenosha News of 12/27/81 stated that the labor costs to build a car are about $420 higher per car in the U.S. Harbour went on to say that the cost of shipping a car from Japan to the U.S. completly cancels out the $420 advantage the Japanese have in labor costs. Second, the Japanese auto companies have prospered with a 6% profit per car, while U.S. companies like GM insist on a whopping 24% profit per car. Besides, if U.S. workers take wage cuts, what is to stop the Japanese from demanding and getting waged cuts from their workers.

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CONCESSION FEVER - UAW SAYS "NO" AT ALLIS CHALMERS

In late October of last year, concessions involving a reopening of the economic agreement were turned down through UAW Vice President Steve Yokich.

Allis Chalmers had the nerve of asking for immediate economic "relief" right after paying a third quarter dividend to stockholders and still paying AC Chairman of the Board David Scott over $992,000 per year.

In 1980 AC for the first time had exceeded $2 billion in sales and had shown a profit in every quarter of 1981. AC also paid out over $26 million in stockholder dividend while only investing $20 million back into the company. The money that was invested was for the most part spent down south or overseas rather than in older plants like West Allis where the corporation built their empire. For example in 1972 AC employed over 5,000 workers in West Allis, but by 1980, employment was down to 3,000 and now is at around 1,600. This has happened at a time when overall employment at Allis Chalmers increased world wide.

The concessions at AC were never tied to any increased job security at the West Allis plant. The International union's opposition to reopening the contract came after strong opposition from the rank and file and Local leaders. Since that time, of course, the International has done an about face on reopening. AC workers will now probably be facing more pressure for concessions since the UAW has voted to allow contracts to be reopened.

FORD WORKERS SAY "NO" IN ALABAMA

Workers at a Ford plant in Sheffield, Alabama have said NO to a proposal which would have cut their wages by 50% in exchange for Ford keeping the plant open. The wage cuts would have meant an immediate cut in the base rate plus the elimination of COLA and shift premium. Also future pensions would be cut by over 60% and insurance benefits slashed. Under the plan there would have been no more casual days, SUB fund and no more than 2 weeks of vacation.

UAW Local 235 President Sonny McCanless said that "We're not going to be the ones to break the back of the UAW. The people have said that they prefer just going out with dignity." Local 235 members were also reportedly angry at the UAW Ford department for letting Ford use Sheffield as a test case to try and break the national contract.

CANADIAN UAW REGIONAL DIRECTOR ROBERT WHITE VOTES "NO" TO REOPENING CONTRACTS

In an interview with the Toronto Star, White said, "If we allow ourselves to be picked off contract by contract, it will kill us. The UAW can't solve the problems of the auto industry by gutting its agreements. Until the interest rates come down and the economy turns around there aren't enough jobs and concession by workers aren't going to make any difference."

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CHIEF STEWARD DISCIPLINED - PEOPLE DONATE $470

836 VIOLATES 24 HOUR NOTICE

People in 836 got an early Christmas present the week before vacation when the company decided to change the model mix. The company claimed that because orders were down they could build what they pleased. They went into the new mix without new man assignments for some of the jobs affected and no 24 hour notice for the people.

Needless to say, quality suffered when the company didn't put enough extra people on the line to handle the bad mix. In fact, the 836 Superintendant's car which was being built that week had to be cut up in the repair hole to get the rear quarter window straight.

When the 836 Chief Steward forcefully insisted on the company at least making the proper manpower moves, he was fired for interfering with production. His discipline was later dropped to 8 actual days off. The people of 836 showed their opposition to the company's attitude by collecting $470 for the Chief Steward to offset his lost wages.

This is not the first time there has been a problem with the 24 hour notice in 836. In good times and bad, the company has seen fit to violate the contract. It is always the people who end up paying for it.

RENAULT PROMOTING UNION - COMPANY RELATIONS?

LAKEFRONT OFFICES OFF-LIMITS TO UNION

As part of the company's propaganda surrounding the 10% "employee investment plan" is supposed to be the Japanese concept of labor/management cooperation.

One of the company's first demonstrations of this new policy came a few weeks ago when union time study and some Chief Stewards were notified that the new Lakefront offices were now OFF LIMITS to the union.

The union time study people were notified that if they intended to have any dealings with I.E. people working on the Renault project, they were to phone ahead and they would be met at the office door.

Looks like Renault is starting a new "closed door policy" when it comes to labor/management relations in Kenosha.

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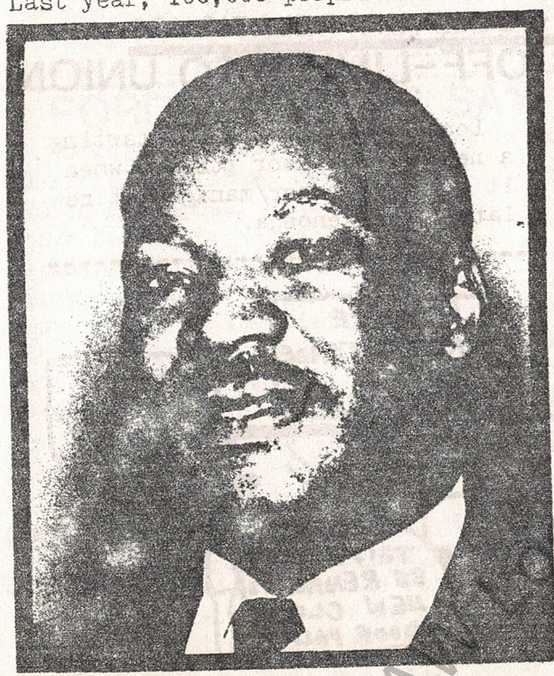
"LET JUSTICE RUN DOWN LIKE WATERS, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A MIGHTY STREAM." MARTIN LUTHER KING

MAKE KING'S BIRTHDAY A NATIONAL HOLIDAY

On January 15, the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King will be celebrated by freedom loving people around the world. From the Montgomery, Ala. bus boycott of 1955 that started the fight against segregation in the South to the open housing marches in Chicago, King was part of a mass social movement that opposed injustice. Recent incidents such as the killing of Ernie Lacey by Milwaukee police show that Dr. King's struggle is not yet won.

In the 14 years since an assasin gunned him down, King's birthday has become a focal point for the continuing struggle against discrimination and for a just society. Last year, 100,000 people marched in Washington D.C. to honor his birthday and to keep the struggle alive. Local programs similar to one held at Local 72 which was attended by 300 people showed that Dr. King's dream lives on.



This year, musical superstar Stevie Wonder has once again called for a January 15 march on Washington. The marchers will present petitions to Congress with 2 million signatures calling on them to pass a law making Dr. King's birthday a national holiday. Here in Local 72 for the first time, we will be getting a paid day off in honor of Dr. King on the Monday after Easter. Our Local is the first in the UAW to win this day off to honor King's contributions to our society. The Local 72 Fair Employment Practices Committee is planning a memorial program for this spring to honor King and highlight Local 72's efforts to win the paid day off.

In a speech last year at a King birthday program in Milwaukee, Howard Fuller of the Lacey coalition summed up what King's dream means today:

"The question is, if you support Martin Luther King, are we going to allow the rich to place the burden for the economic crises on the backs of working class people? Are we going to allow ouselves to get ripped off while they continue to get rich? Is the union going to fight to make sure that doesn't happen? That's how you live Martin Luther King's dream."

838- ASSAULT IN AMC PARKING LOT

Last month a woman on 2nd shift in 838 asked for a pass from her boss during 6:30 break to run out to her car to get her cough syrup for her cold. Her car was parked in the Bonnie Haines lot, where it had been vandalized last August. At that time she had filed a grievance asking for compensation for the damage and for increased security in the parking lots. The grievance had been denied in the first step and moved to the next step along with all cases of parking lot vandalism.

The woman never returned to work that night, because when she reached her car in the lot she was assaulted and abducted at gunpoint. The abductor tied her up and forced her to go with him in her car. Luckily she was able to escape by rolling out while the car was moving.

Although AMC agreed to increased security and lighting in the lots in past negotiations, this incident along with dozens of others illustrate that there is still a problem. With the rising levels of unemployment and the drastic cuts in social programs, crime of course will increase and we are the victims. Sources tell us that AMC is spending $1 million to beautify the outside of the Lakefront Plant. If they are willing to spend that kind of money to clean the bricks at Lakefront, they should be able to spend the money necessary to fence and increase security in the parking lots.

People should also be cautious about walking into the dark parking lots alone at night; walk in pairs or more and respond if neccesary to calls for help from your brothers and sisters.

DEAR FIGHTING TIMES: QUESTIONS ON THE 10% PLAN

Some Points to Consider.

1. Gerry Meyers & crew--how much are they giving up?
2. No new models on drawing board for Concord & Spirit(Bldg. 40)
3. Will Renault back up any investment?
4. What about promise not to reopen contract?
5. Don't give away anything that we'll have to win back with a strike.
6. Don't ever give up any part of COLA, it's the only thing that keeps a working man afloat.
7. How much money is Majerus giving up?

EDITORS NOTE. These points were submitted to F.T. by a skilled tradesman with 27 years in the plant and six kids.

DUES INCREASE FOR LAID-OFF MEMBERS

At the last UAW Convention, the International Union was able to push through a dues increase for laid off members. Despite opposition from many delegates including Local 72's, dues for laid off members collecting SUB is now one hours pay per month instead of $5 per month.

With most laid off members no longer collecting SUB, the International won't get much out of this plan. How about more organizing to bring in new dues paying members?

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ATTENTION SALARY: FRENCH UNIONS MAY BE WILLING TO REPRESENT YOU

One of the first questions we were asked in France by the CGC union was, "What percentage of foremen, technicians and white collar employees are union members in the AMC Kenosha plant?" We were quite surprised to find out that a large percentage of Renault salary employees are members of the CGC. (The CGC was one of the unions that sponsored the first Renault World Conference).

The French were even more surprised than us when we told them that supervisors at AMC not only did not have a union, but had recently lost their automantic 3% raise without even the right to bargain or vote on the company's proposal. In fact an AMC internal letter dated 10/16/81, said that future raises for salaried people would, "be tied to employee performance, achievment, and contributions rather than be granted as an automatic increase." In other words--dog eat dog.

Once again, top management is doing in Kenosha what would be impossible to pull off in France.

INCREASED JEEP SALES IN EUROPE NO WORK FOR MOTOR DIVISION

One of the anticipated side effects of the AMC Renault connection was to be an increase in Jeep sales in Europe through Renault dealers. Starting in March of this year, Renault will begin selling Jeeps in Europe. But, any increased Jeep sales won't benefit Kenosha. That is because Renault will be installing their own French made engines in the Jeeps and not using the ones built here in Kenosha.

It looks like we will have sort of a one way street with Renault parts and engines coming into Kenosha for the X-42 project, but Kenosha built engines not being used in Jeeps sold in Europe.

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